



Letters

We're full of fuzzy feelings for our readers this month. The trickle of love into our inbox makes us feel truly wanted and while there'll always be the odd boob, a wise man told us we should never mind the knockers

NAUGHTY SHOPPER! IN YOUR BED!

I get the impression you think it's a laugh to take the mickey out of your readers on the *Letters* page. We are your bread and butter. Or are you suggesting that your advertisers are more important than your customers? Cut the flippancy and keep it simple.

Oh and by the way, SpySubtract PRO is now Trend Micro Anti-Spyware 3.0. SpySubtract PRO has a new name and improved ability to protect your computer from spyware. Trend Micro Anti-Spyware 3.0 dramatically improves many of the features that existing SpySubtract users have become familiar with. So sharpen up your act guys. Shape up or ship out.

Dave Griff

☞ Your reference to SpySubtract PRO is related to an answer in *Helpfile*, *Shopper* August 2005, where we advised a reader who had problems with spyware to download and run InterMute's CWSredder. We also mentioned that InterMute publishes a fully featured anti-spyware program called SpySubtract PRO.

After we went to press, Trend Micro bought InterMute. Tony Larks, Trend's UK marketing manager, told us that the company will be releasing a full consumer version of this software under the new name, Trend Micro Anti-Spyware 3.0, in August. By the time you read this, it may well be available already.

Trend Micro also now owns CWSredder, which is ideal for cleaning a PC that is infected with the nasty CoolWebSearch spyware program.

CWSredder is available for free from Trend's website (http://uk.trendmicro-europe.com/smb/products/cws_shredder.php), as is a trial version of Anti-Spyware 3.0.

You can also run Anti-Spyware Onlinescan from http://uk.trendmicro-europe.com/smb/products/spyware_scan.php. This will be available until the full version of Anti-Spyware 3.0 is released. Tony Larks says that the consumer version of Anti-Spyware 3.0 will be blended with the PC-cillin security suite by June next year.

None of these details was publicly available when we printed the August issue, so their omission from the magazine is not down to sloppy research but rather a lack of time-travelling abilities. Your accusation of flippancy lowered our spirits for a while, but then we received a phone call from Steve and we cheered up again.

NEVER MIND THE KNOCKERS, MATE



STAR LETTER

My name is Steve Plant, one of your many loyal readers and subscribers. I would just like to say, despite the various comments I've read recently in *Shopper*, the magazine just continues to carry on delivering the goods. It's easy to criticise, but when you set a standard it's very, very hard to maintain that standard. I think you guys do very, very well.

The stuff we keep getting on your cover disc just keeps delivering the goods. Never mind the knockers, mate. You can keep printing their letters, but the sensible ones out here, we just

ignore them because basically they're just not trying hard enough. You guys try more than hard enough. Well done. Month in, month out: excellent magazine, excellent DVD.

I for one will keep on buying and I for one will keep on taking it to work and showing the guys and saying, "Hey look, isn't it time you bought this magazine? What you're buying just doesn't measure up."

Keep up the good work, congratulations on yet another superb issue that just dropped on my mat this morning. Have a good one, old son. I'll be in touch some other time, perhaps. Between now and then, carry on the good work. Well done, one and all, all the team. Bye bye.

Steve Plant (via answering machine message)

☞ Thanks for your kind words of encouragement, Steve. We're very proud of our magazine and it's always nice to hear that others appreciate the exceptionally hard work that the entire team puts into creating each issue. Sadly, we don't hear as much positive feedback as criticism.

Receiving a nice letter, email or, in your case, voicemail from a loyal reader who enjoys reading what we produce is great. We all had a good listen to your message and I can say, with no sarcasm, that it really did make our day. Please give us another call or leave us a message with your address so we can send you a fabulous star prize. Somehow, though, we think you'll value the *Shopper* mug we'll also send you more.

BLACK AND WHITE GREY AREA

First let me say how impressed I am with your magazine. I have only seen a few issues, and have been using a PC for a year. Your magazine has taught me a lot and, when it arrives, I can't put it down. I think I have read your latest issue three times and I keep picking it up to re-read articles. This is new for me, as I can't stand to read, but I find myself going back to your magazine time and again.

I am writing for information purposes, really. I used to play the game Black and White on my PC ages ago. I've since installed Windows XP's Service Pack 2 and now the game doesn't work. What can I do?

James Lloyd

☞ We're suckers for praise. As you buttered us up so nicely, here's the lowdown on running Black and White with Service Pack 2. Take some comfort from the fact that you're not the only one to experience problems with this classic game. There is a semi-official patch available from the game's developer Lionhead Studios that is designed to fix a number of issues.

Black and White's publisher, Electronic Arts (EA), doesn't support this, so don't go crying to its



Add some colour to your Black and White enjoyment

WRITE IN – AND WIN!

The writer of this month's star letter will receive an HD182 Photo Hard Disk from the ATMT Group & Argosy Research Inc, which has been researching and developing IT-based technology products since 1987. The 20GB HD182 has a 9-in-1 memory card reader and allows you to copy directly from flash memory to the hard disk without needing a PC. What's more, it's so compact that it will fit in the palm of your hand so you can take it with you wherever you go.



PLUS! Every letter-writer also receives a fantastic *Shopper* mug!





technical support team if it fails to work. You can download it from EA's FTP site at <ftp://ftp.germany.ea.com/downloads/patch>. The file you need is called `black_white_patch_v1_20.exe`. It is also rumoured that you'll get good results if you uninstall the game and reinstall it into a folder without spaces in the name (eg `C:\EA\BW` rather than `C:\Program Files\EA\BW`). Then run the patch file and you should be OK.

HACKED OFF WITH THE INTERNET

I'm fairly reasonable when it comes to using a computer, but whenever I save work, pictures of myself or other personal information, I am paranoid that hackers will have access to them.

Over a year ago, I met a guy in an online chatroom who was very knowledgeable about such things. I don't want any contact with him and I've since removed internet access from my PC. Now I feel that I can never reconnect because of guys like him.

Please tell me that there is no way for him to have access to my private work, whether I'm connected to the internet or not, even after I've deleted my work. Also, as it is possible for me to restore my deleted work, can hackers find my old files on my hard drive?

Please, please help. I feel so paranoid that I can never put pictures of myself on my own computer because I don't want hackers knowing what I look like.

Jemma

☹ The person you met on the internet may well know lots about hacking, but there are a number of steps you can take to prevent him getting in touch with you. Some of these are technical measures you can take with your computer, while some are more to do with common sense.

If your computer is not connected to the internet and does not have a wireless network connection, then the only people who can access your files are those who have physical access to the computer. Disconnect any modems or network cables from your PC and, if it has an internal wireless card, open Control Panel, click on Network Connections and right-click the icon for the wireless connection. Choose Disable from the drop-down menu. Your PC is now unavailable to anyone except the person at the keyboard.

If you decide to reconnect to the internet, you should install some good security software first. We currently recommend F-Secure's Internet Security 2005, which includes both a firewall and an excellent anti-virus program. These will stop most attackers, making it very hard for them to connect to your PC. Always keep these programs up to date using the built-in update checker.

When you delete files in Windows, the actual data does not leave your hard disk. It is simply marked as deleted and does not appear in Explorer or any regular application. However, parts of your hard disk still hold the data and it can be recovered using inexpensive software. Eventually, your deleted files will be overwritten with newer ones, rendering them unrecoverable to all but the police and other organisations who have access to a lot of expensive equipment.

A hacker won't be able to recover overwritten data realistically, so if you download one of the many free utilities that overwrite deleted data you can ensure that deleted files stay deleted. You no longer have internet access, but luckily our cover disc has a couple of useful utilities that will help. If you have the DVD edition of *Shopper*, look in the Tools, System section and install Eraser. This will destroy deleted files. The cover DVD also contains a full version of Asm PC-Optimizer Pro. Register this, and you'll be able to delete files securely and lock folders using encryption.

Using encryption software will allow you to encode sensitive files so that even if someone does gain access to your PC, they won't be able to read your letters, view your photos or learn anything about you. You will also be able to send private emails to your friends if they install the same software.

Change your email address if you have one, and don't publish your new one on a website or in

any other public place. Similarly, don't create a personal website that includes any details you're not happy to share with a complete stranger. Phone numbers, personal photos and your home address should remain private. Avoid chatrooms, particularly those related to personal matters and, if you need to post messages on sites that require you to register, use a different email address. Free services such as Hotmail are ideal for remaining relatively anonymous, and can be changed as often as you need.

Don't let one person spoil your experience of the internet.

It's too valuable a resource. Just be careful, follow the advice above and start treating online strangers with the same level of caution as you would a stranger who starts chatting to you at a bus stop.

AN OFFER YOU CAN'T REFUSE

The flyer in *Computer Shopper* August 2005 advertised Serif PagePlus 8 for £9.95. I called to place my order but the salesperson said that simply by calling I get a new offer of PagePlus 10 for £29.99 plus £3 postage. And I get the manual! Oh happy days.

PagePlus10 for less than £33 – beat that. I think that the offer is time-limited, though, so it may not be available by the time you print the next issue.

Shaun Poland

☹ Top tip there, Shaun. The loose flier in last month's issue offered an exclusive deal to *Computer Shopper* readers. This offer was set to expire on 21st July, the same day that this issue goes on sale. So if you've bought this issue at the newsagents then you could be out of luck. Sensible subscribers receive the magazine earlier, so they should still have time.

Readers who can't find their old flier from last month can still order Serif PagePlus 10 for £33 all in. Call 0800 3765488 and quote the code PP8/CPS/995. As a special bonus, you've actually got until the end of July to do it because Serif has taken pity on *Shopper* readers who don't subscribe and extended the offer by an extra week.



▲ You can use Eraser on this month's DVD to destroy deleted files for good

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So you non-subscribers have got away with it this time, but if you want to stay connected to the *Shopper* grapevine you really need to call 08451 260389 and quote the offer code P0509XCDC to subscribe. Currently the first three issues will cost you a mere £1. We're not too proud to beg. See page nine for more details.

WHAT'S NOT NEW

For the first time I have bought back-to-back copies of *Computer Shopper*. Overall, the quality of your magazine is excellent. The reviews are thorough and objective, and the articles are varied and interesting. I find myself reading and re-reading the copy over a number of days.

However, I am somewhat irritated that you simply repeat a significant number of reviews in the following month, despite the fact that they appear under a 'What's New' headline. While I can understand the need for some kind of overlap in reviews, since not everyone is going to buy every month's copy of *Computer Shopper*, to claim that reprinted reviews are new is clearly misleading. Either you should not include these at all or, if you do, use a Previously Reviewed heading.

Alex von der Becke

I'm all for recycling, but I think you have taken it a bit far and are showing a bit of a cheek by recycling Hotlist items from *What's New*, *Shopper* May 2005 and using them in *What's New*, *Shopper* August 2005. If you cannot fill your pages with original material then leave some out. *Shopper* weighs enough as it is, but recycling the Hotlist items is underhand. The material is not even current.

Paul Steel

☹ The *What's New* section of the magazine is designed to help readers choose the very best equipment available. If you're after a new LCD screen, PC or anti-virus program you can be sure that our reviewers will know which of those currently available are the best.

Sometimes the best product in a certain category will have been reviewed in a previous issue. For example, two issues ago we reviewed the LG GSA-4163B DVD writer. This remains our preferred option, and that's why you can still read a summary of our original review in this issue's *What's New* Hotlist.

The Hotlist is more dynamic than a simple reprinted review as, unlike other magazines, we keep the prices and specifications updated. If and when we review a better product, the current entry will drop out of the Hotlist and will be replaced with the new one. If you want to buy some new equipment then *What's New* is the place to look for the very latest and greatest options.

BREAKING THE LAW IS FUN

I couldn't help feeling smug as I read the article on playing DVDs on Pocket PCs using commercial software in *Pocket PC Expert*, *Shopper* June 2005. So I thought I should point

out the cheaper/free method of transporting digital video in your pocket.

I have been watching recorded TV programmes and films on my Pocket PC for over a year. My setup is a PC with an ATiTV card, through which I record my favourite programmes using user-friendly software. This consists of ShowShifter, which I first discovered on a *Shopper* cover disc in 2003. The full version, which uses DivX, costs £30 to download. I soon found the wonderful DigiGuide internet TV guide. This costs £8 per year and has a built-in link to ShowShifter. Simply right-clicking on a program on the grid sends the necessary information to ShowShifter for it to make a timed recording.

After recording, the program's title, channel and date are displayed in a file list for easy reference.

This is better and cheaper than SkyPlus, and has the additional benefit of providing small but high-quality DivX files that I regularly burn to CD or DVD for friends and family to watch on laptops and PCs all over the world. All they need is the free DivX player, which I always add to the CD.

Back to Pocket PC. Using the under-rated and free Windows Movie Maker, I import my DivX recording. I choose the Save to my

computer option and then Settings. Then I choose Video for Pocket PC (full screen).

One hour of video (starting as a 600MB file) is turned into a 60MB file that can be sent to my Pocket PC's SD card in five minutes. A combination of free DVD compression software and Movie Maker allows me to copy DVDs to the SD card in the same way. Simply open these files with the free Pocket PC Windows Media Player and enjoy good-quality video and sound in any airport, car or plane.

I find episodes of *The Simpsons* keep my kids happy on journeys for hours. I also have an invaluable collection of DivX files from BBC *Bitesize* school programs, which are broadcast at night. One DVD holds over six hours. These, I find, do not entertain my kids on holiday.

Dr Mark McClean

☹ Thanks for sharing your effective tips with everyone. We know you all know this, but we'd like to point out for the record that copying commercial DVDs is illegal in the UK, even if you own the original disc. The same goes for music CDs. Ripping off borrowed or rented DVDs, or selling or lending your copies to other people, is risky. Telling us – and therefore over 100,000 other people – that you do it is more so, but thanks anyway.

On a serious note, we wouldn't advise that anyone burn and distribute this sort of thing, even for friends and family, because Customs officials tend to take a dim view. Officials often come down hard on tourists who try to sneak out the odd dodgy DVD. Being found carrying copies of films and TV programmes can cause you or your relatives serious problems. Be very careful.

That said, we agree that ShowShifter makes an excellent personal video recorder. We're currently finalising a deal whereby we hope to give away version 2.05 free with our October 2005 issue. ☹



▲ Far from being old news, we ensure that our Hotlists are kept up to date with current prices and specifications